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# Advocate of Peace.

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## Types of International Friendship.

We are not surprised at the flurry which has arisen among the powers over the question which of them was "our friend" just before the outbreak of the war with Spain. If what goes on in the secret chambers of the foreign offices and the councils of diplomats were oftener brought to light, such commotions would be altogether too frequent to be enjoyable.

The revelations which have been made during this contention have given the plain people a clearer knowledge than they have before had of the selfish, petty and vacillating character of much that ordinarily passes for wise and profound statesmanship in these secret conclaves. We shall henceforth have to believe that diplomats and high functionaries are very like ordinary mortals, and that their doings cannot be allowed to pass as necessarily infallible because they happen to occupy the chief seats.

But this revelation has been less humiliating than the childish way in which the high and mighty "powers" through their officials have, if we may use the language of the street, "jawed" one another in their endeavor to let us know what did actually take place, or, rather, what they now wish had taken place, and to retain for themselves each the favor of

our government and people. The whole of the dispute has been conducted about on the plane of "No, I didn't!" "Yes, you did!" and there does not seem to be much room for choice among the participants.

The fact is, our country had, at the time spoken of, no friend in the sense of the term now meant by these curriers for our favor. Every one of the six great powers would have been glad to balk our government in its proposed intervention in Cuba, not from any love of Spain, but simply from the desire to outwit the United States and check her growing power. It is hypocrisy in them now to pretend anything else. There was neutrality finally on the part of all of them, but it was not "friendly." War and the spirit awakened by it never conduce to real friendship. If there was in the minds of Lord Pauncefoot, Baron von Holleben and the others a real desire to prevent a war for which they felt that there was no justification after the concessions offered by Spain, that partook of the nature of real friendship. The power that from this point of view was most opposed to us, if there was one, and not the power which stood by us, was most our friend in the true sense of the word. It is never an act of friendship to stand by one in a wrong.

We do not believe that England — the English government, we mean, not the people — would ever have claimed to have been "our friend," "our only friend," but for the political exigencies into which she has since fallen. Her record is too much against belief in the sincerity of so sudden a conversion. These political exigencies have made her feel the necessity of some one on whom to lean. In her eagerness to keep our government from interfering with her in the iniquitous undertaking which she has had on hand, she has entirely overdone the profession of friendship. That has unstopped the usually hermetically-sealed diplomatic jars and brought out the real facts in the case, and she has been shown to have been as bad as the rest, if not worse.

As to Russia, she seems to have come out of the squabble with more credit for "friendship" toward our government than any other of the powers. She has maintained, apparently, her traditional attitude toward us; but nobody who thinks believes that she had in this instance, or ever has had, any other attachment to us than that which is dictated by a rather low type of political expediency. Dislike of England, as was the case in the Civil War, was much

more truly at the bottom of her refusal to participate in a demonstration against our proposal to go to war for the relief of Cuba than any real love of our country and people, or any real wish to have us succeed in overthrowing the oppressive power of monarchical Spain in the West Indies.

If there is ever to be any real international friendship, as there ought to be, it must be built upon an entirely different foundation from that which lies at the basis of ordinary alliances, coalitions and *rapprochements* between nations. These are at bottom hollow shams, full of hypocrisy and double-dealing, can never be depended on, and in the long run always work injury. They grow out of enmity and the desire to overreach or outwit some other power, and not out of the wish to promote the real welfare of the country with which the alliance or "understanding" is entered into. Every nation which has any self-respect and regard for its highest and best interests ought strictly to avoid them. The nation that "does justly, loves mercy and walks humbly with God," that seeks unselfishly to promote the rights and interests of peoples as men, regardless of the political or commercial profit that is to come from so doing, will have its reward in true and abiding friendship.

We are glad to be able to say that our own country has in the past shown a large measure of this noble, unselfish spirit toward other peoples, and the result has been that we have until recently been respected, honored and even loved abroad as no other nation was ever loved and honored. The departure that we have made from it has already cost us dearly; but a good deal of it still remains, and every citizen of the republic owes it to himself, to his country and to humanity, to try to restore it to its original vigor and brightness, and to develop it to a point much beyond that which it has ever reached. The sorry spectacle which these foreign powers have made of themselves in their efforts to cover up their tracks, and to prove themselves to have been the most unselfish and devoted friends in the world, is enough to restrain our government and people from any wish ever to make experiments along the same line.

### Our Newest Possessions.

We are in the process of "expanding" again. It is not much this time, to be sure, but it is "expansion," and that satisfies the national appetite. The Danish West Indies are to become ours under the treaty (given on another page) between Denmark and our government for their cession to us. The treaty is to be ratified without delay by the Senate, as any treaty for "expansion" would be at the present time. (Since this was written the treaty has been ratified.)

The three islands of the group, St. Thomas, St.

John and Santa Cruz,—all saints,—lie some distance east of Puerto Rico and are a sort of natural appendage thereto. It would be easy, as it would be most natural, to put them under the same governmental control as their bigger neighbor; probably, however, the expansion promoters already have some "governor" slated for this new and important (!) colonial position at a salary of not less than ten thousand a year. Our colonial "governors," however small their dominions, will all have to have big salaries (Governor Taft has twenty thousand dollars a year, four times as much as our Senators and twice as much as the Supreme Court judges receive), that they may properly exhibit, among the high functionaries of other "expansion" powers, the virtues and benevolences of the new American policy.

The material value of these new possessions is not difficult to estimate. The territory of the three islands taken together would make a rectangular strip a little less than twenty-five miles long by ten miles wide, or something under two hundred and fifty square miles. The entire population of the islands is about thirty-two thousand "souls." About three-fourths of them are blacks. The remainder are Danes and others of different nationalities.

For these bits of territory, so small that it is hard to find any trace of them on ordinary maps,—or rather for "sovereignty" over them, for that is what we are after,—our government has agreed to pay the sum of five millions of dollars. That is over thirty dollars per acre for the whole area. This includes, of course, the few government buildings and the fortifications. The West India hurricanes and tidal waves have been thrown in by Denmark as an "inducement." We paid only four times this sum, twenty millions of dollars, for the whole Philippine group of some twelve hundred islands. But sovereignty is a cheaper article in the Orient than in the Occident. Thirty years ago our government was on the point of giving *ten* millions for these same Danish islands. We have saved five millions by listening to Sumner and Seward, and waiting. If we had waited thirty years more we should probably have saved most of the other five millions, for the islands have for some time paid no revenue to Denmark; they have, in fact, been a source of considerable actual loss to her, and in a little time she might possibly have made us a present of them or given us something to take them off her hands.

A writer who has lived in the Danish West Indies closes a very interesting description of the islands, the people and their customs, in a recent article in the *Independent*, by saying that "they are an acquisition to the United States." He uses no adjective with the word, and one is left to guess whether he thinks it a bad or a good bargain.

The real reason why our government desires to own the islands is because of the opportunity their